

Capital Dance Center FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What experience do I need to learn to dance?

A. None at all! At the “Basic” classes, you will find that almost everyone in the class is a beginner just like you. You don’t have to know anything, – just be a “sponge” and soak up as much information you can. Don’t be hard on yourself. Allow yourself to make mistakes and laugh at yourself when you do. (But NEVER laugh at anyone else on the dance floor.

Q. What shoes should I wear to dances and classes?

A. Leather-soled shoes are best. Rubber soles (like running shoes) can stick to the floor, making it harder to dance and sometimes causing knee or ankle injuries. Ladies should avoid backless shoes because they provide no support. And flip-flops are no-nos on the dance floor.

Q. What kind of clothes should I wear?

A. Wear comfortable clothing to classes. For social dances, you’ll want to make yourself neat, clean, and attractive. If the dance is formal or semi-formal, dress accordingly.

Q. What are the benefits of dancing?

A. Dancing improves your health, posture, social skills and mood. It’s a positive hobby.

Q. What if I can’t learn to dance?

A. Everyone can learn to dance! There is no such thing as a person with “two left feet” or a person with no sense of rhythm. Learning new skills takes time and repetition. Everyone learns at different speeds; just relax and keep practicing. All of a sudden, you’ll “get it,” which is great fun.

Q. What if I get nervous or flustered on the dance floor?

A. Just take a few deep breaths. Sounds like a no-brainer, but sometimes when we are concentrating hard, we forget to breathe. This makes us tense and nervous. Brains and muscles require oxygen to work well, so take a deep breath and breathe normally. In less than a minute you will feel much better.

Q. Do I have to do anything special before I go to a dance or a class?

A. Dancing brings you into close proximity to other dancers, so you should always be

extra clean at a ballroom. Shower, shave, and use a deodorant. (You will probably sweat.) Brush your teeth and use mouth wash or a mint if you are not certain your breath smells good. Many people have allergies or sensitivities to scents so avoid strong perfumes, colognes or hand lotions. To prevent the spread of germs, wash your hands before and after you dance.

Q. What if I don't understand what my teacher or partner is telling me?

A. Ask for clarification. There's no such thing as a stupid question. If you are unclear about something, it's good bet that others in the class are wondering too. When you ask questions, everyone in the class benefits.

Q. What is meant by "line of dance?"

A. Some dances (like swing, salsa, and hustle) are done pretty much in place on the dance floor. Other dances (like waltz, quickstep, and foxtrot) move around the dance floor in a counter-clockwise direction. This counter-clockwise direction is the "line of dance." If you move fast around the dance floor, use the fast lane, which is the outer perimeter. Slower dancers should use the lanes closer to the center of the floor. If you want to dance in place, use the center of the dance floor.

Q. What do I do if I bump into another couple on the dance floor?

A. Following the line of dance helps to avoid collisions, but when they do occur, be polite, pleasant and understanding. Both couples should apologize for a collision no matter who is at fault.

Q. How do I ask a woman to dance?

A. Just walk up to the lady, smile at her, hold out your hand inviting her onto the dance floor, and ask, "Would you like to dance?" If the woman declines, don't be discouraged. Wait for another song and ask another lady to dance. As long as you are polite and pleasant, no one will be offended.

Q. What should I do if a man who doesn't appeal to me asks me for a dance?

A. Try to be polite and say yes if the man is not too offensive. Remember, it takes courage for a man to ask a strange woman to dance. Since one dance lasts only a few minutes, you can probably bear it. But if you really don't want to dance with him, simply smile and say, "No, thank you." Don't say something like, "I'm a little tired right now," or "I don't like to rumba." That will only encourage the man to ask you for a subsequent dance. If the man does invite you to dance again, repeat, "No, thank you." However, it would be considered rude if the man asked you a third time, so it's OK to be more direct. "Sorry, I really don't want to dance with you."

Q. What should I do if a woman asks me for a dance?

A. Say yes! Remember, it takes even more courage for a woman to ask a man to

dance. However, if a woman you don't want to dance with asks you for a second dance in one evening, feel free to say, "No, thank you." Politeness has its limits.

Q. Any other advice?

A. Have fun! Just relax, listen to the music, and enjoy the people you meet. Don't worry if you're not a good dancer. We were all beginners once. Remember, you are at the dance to have good time – and each of us has to make his or her own good time.